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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [LE](#) [SY](#)
SUBJECT: LEBANON: GERMAN AMBASSADOR SAYS ANY SUPPORT MUST
BE WITHIN UNIFIL

Classified By: Jeffrey D. Feltman, Ambassador. Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: During an 8/28 meeting with Ambassador Feltman and poloff, German Ambassador to Lebanon Marius Haas provided a readout on the recent visit of a German military delegation to Lebanon. Haas said that Germany is willing to provide technical equipment and support to Lebanon, as well as a substantial maritime component to an augmented UNIFIL, and possibly an air component. Haas stressed that this contribution could only come under the UNIFIL umbrella, and not, as the Lebanese clearly prefer, as a strictly bilateral arrangement. Haas said that PM Siniora has written a letter to Chancellor Merkel requesting equipment, which the Germans have yet to answer. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Haas said the German military delegation came for a one-week assessment and departed on August 27. The Lebanese security delegation, headed by Internal Security Forces (ISF) commande Ashraf Rifi (considered pro-Hariri), claimed that the Beirut port and international airport are both safe and that no smuggling is possible through points of entry. The Lebanese also claimed to have purchased two scanners for the airport. Consequently, the Lebanese urged the German delegation to focus more on security and customs procedures at the northern port of Tripoli (the delegation did not inspect Tyre or Sidon). Not believing everything they heard, the Germans assessed -- internally -- that the Tripoli and Beirut ports and Beirut airport are all "not in good order."

13. (C) On the Syria-Lebanon border, the Lebanese spoke of "six stations" along the frontier which would need to be equipped with advanced surveillance equipment. The German delegation told the Lebanese they could offer technical assistance and training on the border, ports, and airport, as well as air patrols over land and sea (Haas mentioned specifically Tornado jets), and a significant maritime component of as many as 1,200 sailors.

14. (C) Haas said the Cabinet could approve the naval force as early as next week, and that parliamentary approval would soon follow. The Germans will likely insist that the force, which will include other Europeans, have the "ability to fire." He added that the German warship "Frankfurt" could begin sailing to Lebanon before government approval if it came as part of a "humanitarian" flotilla.

15. (C) The Ambassador asked if the Germans have confidence in the Lebanese personnel who would be operating the equipment. Haas said that the initial Lebanese response to the German offer had not been especially receptive, leaving the delegation with the impression that while they badly want the sophisticated equipment, they do not care for the German trainers who would be part of the package. "Training is part of the deal," Haas said, adding that, "Our assessment is that the pro-Syrian element is still very strong."

16. (C) Siniora has sent an "ambitious" written request to Chancellor Merkel requesting equipment, according to Haas, and Berlin still owes him a response. While Siniora had at

first seemed supportive of the maritime component, he had suddenly gotten cold feet when he saw the large scale of the proposed naval force. Haas added that Siniora prefers a strict bilateral arrangement between Lebanon and Germany, but that Berlin is insisting that German support come as part of an augmented UNIFIL. "The Lebanese are not eager to have UNIFIL as an intermediary," said Haas, who stressed that the Germans will accept no other arrangement.

FELTMAN